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The Practices of Peacebuilding in South Omo: A Qualitative Case Study in Hammer, Dassanech, Nyangatom Woreda and the Turkana Kenya Community

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Abstract

The study examined the practices of peacebuilding in the south Omo zone pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities of Dassanech, Hamer, Nyangatom, Woreda of Ethiopia and the Kenya-Turkana cross-border resource-based conflicts. The study investigated internal and cross-border peacebuilding practices. To achieve the objective of the study, a qualitative research approach and case study research design were used. The study revealed that peace is the highest priority of the pastoral and agro-pastoral community who view conflict as synonymous with starvation, and poverty. The study also revealed that peacebuilding efforts between the two communities involve a range of actors and approaches. Key actors include: the Government, non-state actors, international organizations, public administrators, intergovernmental organizations and indigenous community-based institutions. They play a significant role in conflict management, prevention, and resolution as part of the broader peacebuilding process. While the outcomes of these practices have been less effective, these initiatives are recognized as valuable foundations for advancing peacebuilding efforts. The study also finds that there is relative peace in the study area and the trends of conflict are reduced. However, the objective of building peace is still not achieved because of the lack of government commitment to engage in peacebuilding and the complex nature of conflicts. Factors such as environmental changes, land disputes, resource scarcity, drought, the proliferation of small arms, livestock raiding, and killings are identified as key causes and triggers of conflict and violence between the two communities The peacebuilding practices need to be done by various peace actors to create peace in the area. Moreover, developing new peace initiatives and peace leadership could play a vital role in the realization of peace in the area.

Keywords

Peacebuilding; Resources; Conflict; Cross-border conflict; Pastoralism; Agro-pastoralism; Land

Introduction

Pastoralism is a livelihood mechanism and trans-human activity characterized by livestock herding and movement in the arid and semi-arid lands of East Africa. Pastoralists and agro-pastoralists move with their livestock and in most cases, raids, livestock theft, abduction, droughts, presence of illegal arms, inaccessibility of pasture land, water, epidemics, degradation, negative cultural practices instigate conflict and violence. Addressing these challenges requires implementing mechanisms that promote peace and development (IGAD, 2022). The nature of internal and cross-border pastoralist natural resource-based conflict is resource-driven. Furthermore, the salient triggers of conflict as a politically motivated, quest for maintaining livelihood and ethnic-based resource sharing and control within and across borders. It is frequently witnessed across the border with common signs seeming inevitable due to resource scarcity and environmental degradation (pers. Comm., Department Head of South Omo Zone Peace and Militia Office, 2023). The sources of the conflict are complex and multi-layered and need peaceful solutions because the multi-layered factors leading to conflict in the area are interconnected to the livelihood and survival of the community.

Conflict and peace have an impact on the relationship of the community. Peacebuilding processes vary depending on the context of the conflicts. Peacebuilding approaches can create an environment of positive community relationships (Karbo, 2008). Researchers classify the peacebuilding approaches into state-based and non-state-based traditional approaches (Murithi, 2008; Omeje, 2008). Peacebuilding practices need the role of state, and non-state actors with strategies to sustain peace in the control and utilization of resources like land, pasture, water points and water bodies. Creating peaceful utilization of these resources is vital for the survival, livelihood and development of the pastoral and semi-pastoral community. The conflict in the area is situational. Mostly the resource-based conflict is exacerbated during dry sessions. This is a time of resource shortage and the community is always in search of these resources anywhere across the boundary of the two countries (Pavanello and Levine, 2011). Land and water, in particular, can be structural drivers of pastoralist conflict and violence (Nilsson, n.d). Several interventions are being carried out by NGOs, international organizations, intergovernmental organizations and the governments in the study area to build peace and mitigate conflict and violence (European Union Emergency Trust Fund, 2016). The states are not the only actors in peacebuilding. It involves the participation of various non-state actors. Because the state cantered approaches of peacebuilding are unable to address conflict and violence (Toru, 2010). Community-based peacebuilding approaches are an important part of conflict intervention. Public administrators and Indigenous community-based approaches to peacebuilding contribute to conflict resolution and resource sharing among the pastoral community. Indigenous conflict resolutions have been recognized by the states of Kenya and Ethiopia to create conditions of sustainable inter-ethnic peace based on their peace culture, norms and values (pers. Comm., Department Head of South Omo Zone Peace and Militia Office, 2023). Moreover, intergovernmental organizations like the European Union and IGAD, NGOs and civil society development institutions could be vital for peace.

This study argues that multiple approaches to peacebuilding are the most important mechanism for resolving cross-border resource-based conflict and creating sustainable

peace between the two countries' pastoralist communities. The specific objectives of this study are:

1) To identify the underlying cause of internal and cross-border conflicts among the Hamer, Dassanech and Nyangatom communities in Ethiopia, and the Turkana pastoralist and agro-pastoralists in Kenya;
2) To examine the practice of the peacebuilding system applied; and
3) To show the contributions of the system to conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

This article will contribute to existing literature on peacebuilding by analyzing and investigating the peacebuilding practice in internal and cross-border resource utilization conflicts. Based on the researcher's information and online sources, no prior studies have focused on the peacebuilding practices addressing internal and cross-border conflicts involving the Hamer, Dassanech, and Nyangatom Woredas of Ethiopia, as well as the Turkana communities in Kenya. This research aims to fill that gap and contribute to the development and enhancement of peacebuilding systems for managing internal and cross-border pastoral conflicts and violence.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Lederach theory of grassroots peace-building is a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, activities and stages needed to transform conflict towards more sustainable, peaceful relations. Peacebuilding practices need the transformation of conflict through various peacebuilding mechanisms like conflict resolution, management, negotiation, and prevention (Lederach, 1997). In addition, peacebuilding is a long-term, dynamic process, which aims to address relational, structural, attitudinal, and social issues through a vast array of mechanisms that co-create an infrastructure for peace. The peace infrastructures can influence the conflict situation to create sustainable peace among or between the conflicting groups (Ramcharan, 2009). Further, local community participation, capacity-building, institutional building, relationship-building, and cross-community dialogue are also required to address the root causes of conflict and its impacts (Jeong, 2005; Lederach, 1997; Zelizer, 2013).

Peacebuilding needs the long-term commitment to establishing an infrastructure of peace across the levels of a society, community and groups that empower the resources for reconciliation from within and maximize the contribution from others like NGOs, states, international organizations, inter-governmental organizations or peace actors from abroad (Lederach, 1997). The reconciliation of polarized communities is an important step within any peacebuilding process. Reconciliation prevents, once and for all, the use of the past as the seed of renewed conflict and violence. It also consolidates peace and breaks the cycle of violence in society (Mac Ginty and Williams, 2009).

As suggested by democratic peace theorists, democracy is the driving force of peace and economic development. Democracies do not take the path of war or violence rather they opt to work on the principles of cooperation, understanding and respect. Peace is also achievable through economic development-based cooperation (Patapan, 2012). As part of it, the economic peace theory, explains that the actors of government and civil society should cooperate economically, socially, and culturally on the ground with informants

like government officials, and NGOs, which can ensure stability and maintain peace. Solutions must be adopted by the top and middle leadership at the grassroots (Lederach, 1997). The political peace process must be strengthened by opening up opportunities to communicate across conflict lines, understanding the interests and desires of the other party confirming one's interests, and exploring viable alternative approaches that meet the needs of both parties. Peacebuilding initiatives include cross-cutting or inclusive relationships, such as people-to-people, business-to-business, and institution-to-institution initiatives. Economic peace theory suggests this economic interdependence promotes peace and prevents conflict. At the macro level, economic peace involves structural reforms to create an environment for peacebuilding (Galtung, 1975). Beyond the grassroots peacebuilding, the UN Agenda for Peace suggested that states conduct diplomatic negotiations and discussions for the peaceful settlement of disputes (Ghali, 1992). Diplomacy as a conflict and violence resolution mechanism is taken as a theoretical framework because it is important to analyze inter-state diplomatic engagement in cross-border resources-based and resource-sharing conflicts.

This study analyzed various governmental perspectives through the lens of peacebuilding theories, including the UN Agenda for Peace and the economic theory of peace, to explore the dynamics of internal and cross-border conflicts and peacebuilding efforts. It focused on the Dassanech, Hamer, and Nyangatom Woredas of Ethiopia, as well as the Turkana community of Kenya. The theoretical framework supports this analysis by examining the practices, approaches, and mechanisms of peacebuilding, highlighting its relevance to both positive and negative peace within the specific contexts of these conflicts.

By applying these theoretical approaches, particularly to resource-based internal and cross-border conflicts, the study emphasizes the critical role of grassroots governmental and non-governmental actors. These actors are shown to be particularly effective in addressing such conflicts and fostering reconciliation, offering contextually relevant mechanisms to heal the wounds of violence and build sustainable peace.

Methodology

This research employed qualitative research methods and multiple case study designs. The research was conducted through the analysis of primary and secondary data sources. Purposive sampling was used to identify key informants from among government officials, NGOs, elders' peace and militia officers, conflict prevention, early warning and early response experts on the Ethiopian side. The data related to the Kenyan side of the study were gathered indirectly, relying on secondary sources and primary data collected from Ethiopian participants. 107 individuals were selected to participate in interviews and focus group discussions. Six focus group discussions were used for the local peace committees, the Keble peace committee, community members, and public administrators comprising at least eight people in each group discussion on the Ethiopian side. The information about the Kenyan side depended on secondary data and was based on the primary data taken from Ethiopians. FGD, interview, and document analysis were employed to investigate the multiple approaches and practices of peacebuilding in cross-border resource-based conflicts. The purpose of all of the tools was to produce reliable data using data triangulation. The data obtained through unstructured interviews, and

FGDs and document analysis were organized based on themes, contents and analyzed qualitatively or inductively. In addition, direct quotes were used that described the views or opinions of interviewees about the study objectives. The study depends on secondary sources of data in the Kenyan side only and only qualitative approaches are used.

Results and Discussion

Causes of Conflicts

The conflicts in the region are both internal and cross-border. Internal conflict is the driver of cross-border conflicts as its base is a shortage of resources. Land, in particular, emerges as a critical source of contention due to its role in providing access to pasture, water, fishing grounds, and agricultural areas vital for livelihoods. According to Yntiso (2016), and Mwangi (20204), key resources like livestock, water, grazing land, flood retreat agricultural land and fish stocks are the main resources for the livelihood of local communities on both sides of the border areas. These resources are indispensable for the overall sustenance of the communities. Among them, water and pastureland stand out as the most crucial and contested resources, given their significance in supporting agro-pastoralist lifestyles. One major driver of conflict is the seasonal migration of agro-pastoralists in search of pasture and water for their livestock. This mobility often leads to disputes, particularly during dry seasons when resources become even scarcer. Informants noted that Ethiopian pastoralists frequently migrate to areas along the Kenyan border, while Kenyan communities also cross into Ethiopian territories. However, Ethiopian pastoralists' mobility is more pronounced during dry periods, further intensifying resource competition and conflict.

The Turkana area is the area for both Ethiopians and Kenyans and the competition over resources is often fierce across borders. Conflict over access to land, water and fishing rights is common between communities in the two countries. The resource scarcity and conflict are severely exacerbated by government or state development projects of the Gibe III dam through the transformation of communal lands into large-scale irrigated cash-crop schemes for sugar cane and cotton. These projects have displaced communities from their land without compensation and reduced the amount of water available to the Dassanech, Arbore and Turkana, who are downstream from the Omo and Wiyot rivers. Conflicts can also arise between upstream and downstream communities, particularly due to issues related to resource management and equity. One notable source of grievance is the lack of compensation provided by the Ethiopian government to pastoralists for their land (pers. Comm., Department Head of South Omo Zone Peace and Militia Office, 2023). This omission fosters resentment within the community and indirectly contributes to cross-border mobility and conflicts.

The conflicts are triggered by environmental and man-made factors like unpredictable weather conditions, environmental degradation, drought, and resource pressure caused by population large-scale development projects. These issues influence livelihoods and can result in conflict and instability between groups competing for access to land, pasture, water and fishing areas. Competition over resources is often fierce across borders. Conflict over access to land, water and fishing rights is common between the two countries (pers. Comm., Department Head of South Omo Zone Peace and Militia

Office, 2023). Resource scarcity and conflict are severely exacerbated by government or state development projects.

In addition, the informants explained the conflict in the following manner:

> *"The conflict takes the form of clan conflict as rival groups compete and fight over scarce resources like water points, cattle raiding (Plate 1) and lakes for fishing. Some conflicts are driven by historical clan rivalries. Internal conflicts can be seen between the Nyangatom and Suri, Dassanech and Nyangatom, Dassanech and Hamer, Dassanech and Turkana, Nyangatom and Turkana, Hamer and Mursi, and Hamer and Erbore over land. The internal conflicts exacerbate the external or cross-border resource-based conflicts. When we come to the cross-border conflicts, the Hamer also fights with the Gabra community and Turkana over fishing rights and range land. The increasing pressure on resources pushes the border area community to resort to violence to gain access to resources. The other cause of conflict in the study area is animal raiding as a cultural value and practice. Our culture promotes animal raiding (FGD 1 and interview with south Omo zone peace and militia office)."*

Figure 1: Shows the return of looted cattle from Kenya to Ethiopia
The picture above shows the return of the looted cattle from Kenya to Ethiopia

The Role of Various Peacebuilding Actors, Dassanech, Nyangatom Woreda of Ethiopia and the Turkana of Kenya

The State as a Peacebuilding Actor

The governments of Ethiopia and Kenya have worked together to mitigate the conflict, build peace and facilitate the transformation of conflicts among pastoralists and agro-pastoralist communities in the Dassanech and Nyangatom Woreda of Ethiopia and their counterparts in Kenya. As (Lederach, 1997), stated, peacebuilding in a conflict can be done by the state security mechanisms. For instance, the state police force, the military and the local militia can manage conflict and violence by applying the state's early warning and response system can reduce further violence.

State-led diplomacy is one of the mechanisms to deal with cross-border conflict resolution, prevention, management and overall peacebuilding. Inter-state diplomacy is done for the reduction of conflict and violence together with other peacebuilding mechanisms in the study area (pers. Comm., Department Head of South Omo Zone Peace and Militia Office, 2023). The two states' security system also contributes too for communication and conflict prevention. Diplomatic practices are conducted as a mechanism for peace and largely include non-state and state actors. Public diplomacy is also the other approach to cross-border conflict prevention and peace done in the study area. Public diplomacy creates an opportunity for each to broaden the friendship relations between the two countries.

The two state governments conduct conflict resolution through elders, conflict management through the police offices and conflict prevention activities through the Woreda Conflict Early Warning and Response offices. The Dassanech, hammer and Nyangatom Woreda of Ethiopia administration work to enhance peace through established peace committees from the cattle keeper, elders, police and women. They have played a pivotal role in addressing community conflicts through the enhancement of communication understanding. The role of peace committees is primarily focused on conflict prevention and resolution. They try to communicate with the Woreda security offices to reduce conflict and violence. The Woreda governments have direct responsibilities for citizen security, peace and welfare. From the focus group discussion with the district government officials of the two sides, the study identified their roles to include working to share information and resolve conflict with the established peace committee, government bodies, elders and police officers. Even if the security officers are part of it, conflicts are resolved based on the culture of the two communities. There is a weak collaboration between Kenya and Ethiopia to engage in cross-border peacebuilding programs (FGD, 1, 3 and interview with the zonal peace and security office). As part of the governments of the two states, IGAD is also active in the border area to deal with conflict and peace. In the past, its main focus was on the collection, analysis and dissemination of conflict early warning information to the concerned bodies. It was also involved in two regional projects:

(i) The Regional Pastoral Livelihoods Resilience Project (RPLRP)[1] and

[1] *Ethiopia - Regional Pastoral Livelihoods Resilience Project: environmental and social management framework (English).* Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.

(ii) The Drought Resilience Sustainable Livelihoods Project (DRSLP)[2], which focuses on natural resource management, markets, livelihoods and disaster risk management contributing indirectly to conflict mitigation and peacebuilding. In spite of the regional focus of these projects, the present research suggests a weak collaboration between Kenya and Ethiopia, with little evidence of joint planning and consultation.

Recently fish represents a new livelihood for some communities living near Lake Turkana.[3] The possibility of developing bilateral agreements between Kenya and Ethiopia may open up new options for Ethiopian pastoralists to move their herds into pastures that have the potential for additional production. Education and the opening up of wage employment opportunities for educated Nyangatom, and Dassanech may provide more diverse livelihoods that will contribute to resilience (USAID, 2021). These promote peace and improve community relationships. The government in collaboration with the EU, the Ethiopian Institute of Peace and the Ethiopian pastoralist association tries to create awareness about the culture of peace and the ways of peaceful co-existence.

The state police force, the military and the local militia can manage conflict and violence by applying the early warning, and response system can reduce further violence as seen in figure 2.

Figure 2: Public/community level Discussion between the police forces of two neighbouring states, engaging with communities from both countries to promote peacebuilding efforts

http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/953271468202451582/Ethiopia-Regional-Pastoral-Livelihoods-Resilience-Project-environmental-and-social-management-framework.

2 Ethiopia - Drought Resilience and Sustainable Livelihoods Programme - Ethiopia Project (DRSLP-II) - IPR June 2021

3 Ethiopia: The Untapped Fishery Resources of Omo-Turkana Basin, 2020. The Ethiopian Herald, 2020. https://allafrica.com/stories/202012160713.html

Non-Governmental Organizations

Some NGOs are attempting to promote greater resource sharing to reduce conflict.[4] International organizations have supported various peace efforts such as training, forums, peace clubs, peace radios, and peace committees as noted by The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2015). In the study area except for peace committees and training, others are nonexistent (pers. comm. with Woreda Conflict Prevention and Early Response Office, 2022). Non-governmental organizations like FBOs, Riam Riam Peace Network, IOM, Mercy Corps, Oxfam GB, EpaRDA, and SAPCONE, commit the two communities peace help in the dissemination of information, providing training and participating in reconciliations. They provide education in the form of training to develop a culture of peace in the community (FGD 4). Based on the theory of culture of peace, the conflicting parties develop the attitude of nonviolence and fierce determination to defend human rights, justice and human dignity for the existence of peace in a community is expected from all members of a community. Peace will be a permanent feature of all social institutions, especially, the economic scene.

In both pre and post-conflict contexts, the involvement of intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, including NGOs, plays a crucial role as key drivers of peacebuilding and peace-related activities. The NGOs play an important role in advocacy to help the Woreda or districts to ensure peace and reduce conflict. NGOs are at the cutting edge of people-centred structural peace-building diplomacy practices between the two communities. In Ethiopia, international organizations and national Civil Society Organizations have had a crucial role in establishing local peace committees. CSOs have roles in the support of continuity of peace dialogues between the conflicting parties. They provide the skill of peacebuilding to leaders to enhance community-based peacebuilding (interview with Zonal and Woreda Peace, Conflict Prevention and Early Response Office, 2022).

There are many NGOs engaged in various activities. Specifically, 44 NGOs are working on cross-border issues. The 24 NGOs are on the Ethiopian side and 20 on the Kenya side. Within Ethiopia, most of their activities are focused on livelihoods and resilience, which include interventions such as rangeland management, agriculture and water.[5]

Local Peace Committees in Kebeles or Small Local Administrative Units

To address cross-border conflict harmonizing committees are established to reduce conflict and violence in the study area. For the success of peacebuilding, community participation is taken as the best strategy. In Dassanech, Nyangatom and Hammer Woreda of Ethiopia, peace committees were established to strengthen village peace, and border area peace. Conflict information sharing for concerned government bodies by cattle keepers and other community members is conducted to prevent violence. International organizations and National Civil Society Organizations have had a crucial role in establishing local peace committees around the borders. The Woreda peace committees have a mandate to facilitate the process of conflict resolution and to resolve conflicts. The

[4] Pathway to peace, Pastoralist community Initiative and Development Assistance.
[5] Cross-border analysis and mapping final report (2016).

committees meet irregularly to address any conflicts in the community and between the two communities. Conflicts are resolved especially by tribal leaders or elders.

Local administration representatives for women and youth, and elders are members of the committee. Kebele peace committees are more inclusive in establishments. The lack of active joint-Woreda district and cross-border peace committees hinders the timely resolution of conflicts and destructive violence that happened between the two states. The peace committees are one of the peacebuilding structures to facilitate people-to-people diplomacy in the part of Ethiopia and public diplomacy to the side of Kenya. To make public diplomacy or people-to-people diplomacy the south Omo zone government officials and the Woreda leaders play a significant role in using sport as an instrument of peace.

The Role of Indigenous Community-Based Institutions in Border Peacebuilding

The institution of traditional leadership has its origin from ancient times when communities sharing the same beliefs and kinship were allocated land for occupation and grazing, (Bennett and Murray, 1999). Indigenous institutions are used to address internal and external conflicts in pastoral communities of the study area. In the traditional institutions of the study area, tribal elders are engaged in conflict resolution and management. These institutions are effective in managing conflicts within their ethnic groups, and they also sometimes play a role in resolving conflict outside their ethnic group in cross-border conflicts as seen in figure 3. In each Woreda, there is a peace and security committee including tribal leaders or elders which is mandated to prevent, and settle conflicts in its area and also can participate in cross-border conflict resolution and prevention if they are selected by the community.

Figure 3: The picture shows a community discussion on resource conflict and its resolution [*Source:* Woreda government communication affairs]

Conflict resolution was identified as the primary priority by the community on shared resources like water and land for pasture. Community-based dialogue is also the way to address the root causes of conflict in the study area. The local community institutions are empowered to make their own decisions on conflicts and be part of the peace-making process. The Indigenous system provides better results when it comes to conflict resolution in the community of the study area. A large number of people who live in traditional communities subscribe to the principles of customary law and embrace the traditional court systems. They contribute tremendously to the dynamics of peace.

Figure 4: The approaches of peacebuilding in cross-border pastoral conflicts

Peacebuilding is multidimensional, the above-stated peacebuilding approaches in figure 4 are interconnected and the realization of one peacebuilding approach is dependent on the other to achieve the goal of peacebuilding. One peacebuilding approach can support the other approach to achieve the overall goal of cross-border peacebuilding. Achieving peace requires inclusive participation, and shared responsibility involving the state, civil society, and different international and local organizational structures. Multiple actors working in a coordinated manner as well as the use of multiple approaches are essential in conflict resolution in cross-border pastoral resource-based conflicts. The study highlights several

peacebuilding activities implemented in the area, which serve as systems to reduce conflict risks and threats and are considered key mitigation strategies (Figure 5).

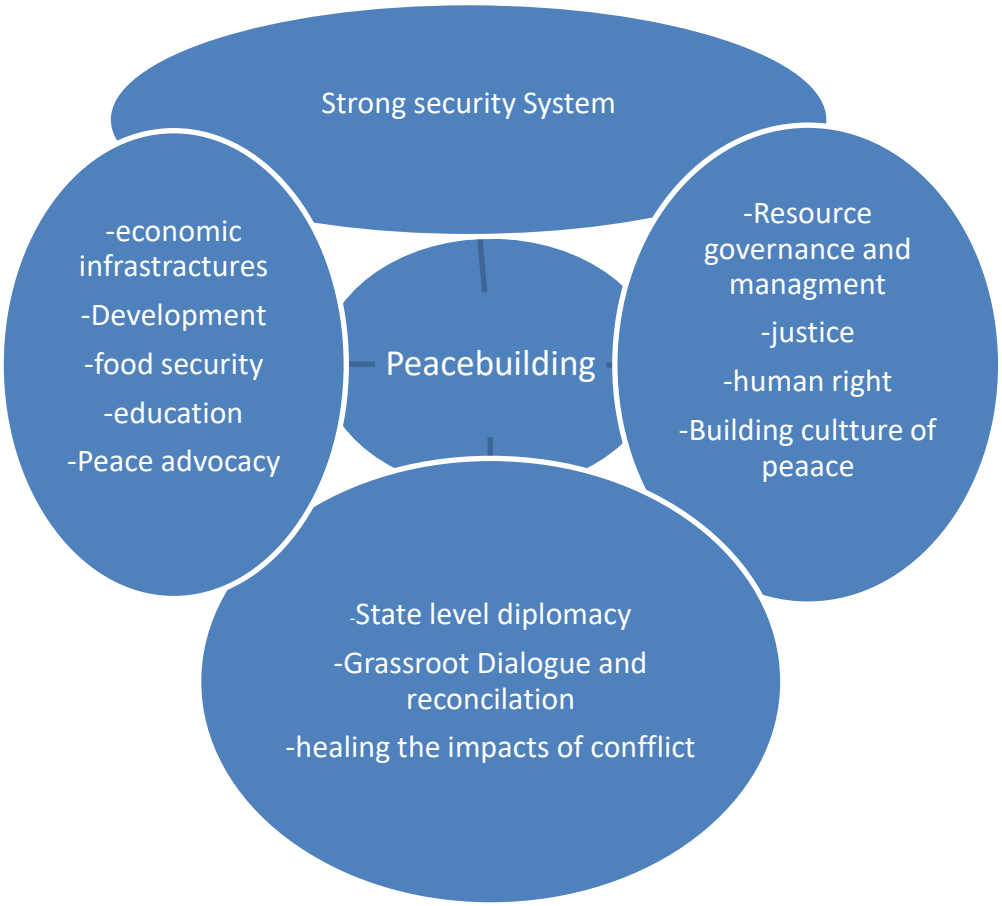

Figure 5: Framework of Peacebuilding

Weak resource governance, economic problems, population growth and environmental degradation are also drivers of conflict and violence (UN Environment Programme and UN Department for Political Affairs, 2015). Shortage of livelihoods and social-economic deprivation, particularly when coupled with a sense of historic marginalization, animate grievances. The study area community especially the Ethiopian side was marginalized from development like education and economic development but nowadays there are few improvements in such areas.

Peace needs to emerge organically from within society, addressing the multiple concerns and aspirations and seeking common ground so that all sectors feel invested in strategies, policies and mechanisms that offer the way forward to grassroots community peace (Chandran and Chari, 2015). When well-managed, natural resources can be a source of development, stability and peace. When mismanaged or misappropriated, they can have severely negative economic, social and environmental effects and constitute conflict and violence led a massive loss for peacebuilding and development. Development is critical

to preventing both lapse and relapse into conflict natural resource conflict. Human rights violations like killings of tribal members are also causes of conflict and must be addressed as early as possible so as not to trigger resource conflicts.

Pastoralist and Agro-pastoralist Women in Peacebuilding

Women are not always merely victims of conflict; their active participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding is increasingly recognized. The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)[6] emphasizes the importance of enhancing women's involvement in conflict resolution processes, highlighting their significant and transformative role in achieving sustainable peace. These have resulted in a worldwide call to involve women in issues of peace and conflict as active participants (2000). The activity of peace building among the pastoralist communities in the study area is given to the elders but nowadays there is an increasing involvement of other groups in the community such as women and youth in promoting peace among the conflicting community. The committee is established to deal with conflict resolution within the community. Women help their male counterparts to see things from a different peace perspective and the need to embrace dialogue in resolving inter and intra-ethnic conflicts. It shows that women are not the part and victims of conflict but also they are part of the solution. Women's peace leadership is important for conflict mitigation. Women are not always the victims of conflict as the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) calls for enhanced involvement of women in conflict resolution processes is an indication of the significant role women play in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Football Sport as a Pathway to Peacebuilding

Football sport is one sport used to create positive relationships in the study area community and it is the mechanism planned by the government to increase communication, and mutual understanding (pers. comm. with Woreda Peace and Militia office, 2022). Peacebuilding through football sports is practised by community members to liberate their minds and encourage mutual understanding as sports are not just physical activity but rather a system used to bring people together. Sports are not just physical activity regulated by norms and rules, rather, they are understood as a wider cultural expression that may bring people together by serving as a common denominator between communities who can, in the best case, actively mobilize in the name of peace and living together, and development of peace (Figure 6).

Conflict and Drought Early Warning System

The rural development Program in Ethiopia being implemented by the state did not give attention to the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist areas. The area is marginalized from development programs. Conflict and drought are common phenomena and the primary sources of vulnerability in the study area, with people being significantly affected by both. The conflict and drought early warning and response system is very weak. Having a functional drought and conflict early warning and response system will help reduce its

[6] https://www.un.org/shestandsforpeace/content/united-nations-security-council-resolution-1325-2000-sres1325-2000

negative impacts on the community. Adopting drought and conflict early warning and response information gathering and rapid response mechanisms is useful to pastoralists and agro-pastoralists for conflict transformation. However, the system in the study area is not working. The existences of the system have long-term importance for livelihood change and diversification. Furthermore, it is good for grass adaptation to drought and water development.

Figure 6: Football sport held b/n the Kenyan and Ethiopian community in south Omo Ethiopia

Conflict early warning and response mechanisms are established at levels of government. However, the system in the study is incomplete and all of the structures of it are not institutionalized for the needed purpose. The mechanism lacks professionals in conflict analysis and interpretation. The conflict early warning information gatherings need to be done by professionals. Using field monitors, conflict data gatherers generate important conflict data for proper analysis and decision-making to prevent conflicts before they erupt and further escalation as it is part of the conflict transformation strategies. According to Lederach (1997), to transform the conflicts its structures, contexts and actors should be well studied. Based on the findings a study, state and non-state actors could collaborate with the community in alleviating resource scarcity and promote inter-dependence or resource sharing between communities.

According to key informants, strengthening institutions for Peace and development in the study area lacks the involvement of state and non-state actors. IGAD and USAID are trying to support to building the efficiency of the peace architecture at national, regional and Woreda levels. IGAD's CEWARN is also used to collect and analyze early warning information from the area, particularly the Dassanech and Nyangatom Woredas and Turkana areas. The Ethiopian Peace and Development Centre (PDC) completed a project on "Strengthening Local Cross-Border Conflict Management in Lake Turkana-South Omo Cross Border Area". The purpose of the project is the management of cross-border resources based conflicts. The security situation on the ground makes to run the project on the Ethiopian side. In addition to PDC, PACT Ethiopia is working on the peace of the community in the area However, the number of potential implementing agencies on the Ethiopian side is limited. This indicated the issue of conflict transformation in the study area is not given the emphasis.

Water Resources Development and Management

According to key informants, the study area has rich ground and river water but the problem is development and management for use. To transform water-related conflicts, water resources development and management can play a significant role. The Ministry of Water, Pastoral Affairs, Irrigation and Energy did not do activities for conflict transformation. As water is an important and scarce resource in the area, much of the conflict and tension within and across borders is on it. At the local level, the presence of development projects such as sugar cane and cotton farms and the Gibe III dam have exacerbated water availability in downstream communities, such as the Dassenech, Erbore and Turkana communities but other areas did not have access to water. In this context, water management and development needs national and international relations to transform internal and cross-border water-related conflicts. The state's (Ethiopia and Kenya) cooperative interventions help to ensure fair and sustainable access to water sources strengthen livelihoods reduce instability and in the long time frame can transform cross-border conflicts. But the governments are negligent or maybe did not give attention to it.

The existence and access to good rangeland are crucial for a well-performing and stable agro-pastoral and pastoral system (IGAD, 2022). Deterioration of rangeland across the study area adds pressure to the livelihood of the community and instigates conflict in the search for pasture, bushes, and water. The cause of the rangeland's decline is due to the increase in pastoral households and their herd, climate change, withdrawal of rangelands from the pastoral area for commercial agriculture, and dams built upstream. Conflict and drought pose significant threats in Nyangatom and Turkana, serving as the main sources of vulnerability for the communities in these regions.

Informal community institutions of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists know the rangelands and how to rehabilitate them for use. The local knowledge is not promoted by state and non-state actors for the rehabilitation of rangeland. In the study area, the experience and lessons could be drawn from the Pastoral Community Development Program. It was working in this area on sustainable livelihood enhancement and pastoral risk management. PCDP activities are anchored on range management and supporting pastoral livelihoods, and in situations where there are already established villages, it supports the building of water facilities. NGOs such as AFD, Farm Africa, VITA, DRSL and RPLR were engaged in rangeland rehabilitation activities.

The Role of Public Administrators in Peacebuilding

Public administrators at the district/Woreda level played a vital role in fostering peace between the two countries and among the conflicting parties. They facilitate public peace meetings, public diplomatic relations, and leader-to-leader diplomatic discussions, and support various peace initiatives commenced by NGOs, and intergovernmental and governmental organizations. They are also working on finding pacific mechanisms of conflict mitigation, livelihood diversification, and improvement the governmentally designed projects on both sides.

The Opportunities of Peacebuilding in the Study Area

There are opportunities for peacebuilding in the study area, the following are the identified opportunities based on the collected data:

- Formal and informal education is also seen as an opportunity to contribute to the erosion of interest in conflict among pastoralists especially among the youth. There is little change in behaviours among the youth pastoralist community. Through time people develop a culture of peace because of the influence of education.
- Diversification of livelihoods in addition to pastoralism in some areas of the study area is observed to reduce conflict on pasture and water. Engaging in rainfed agriculture and using irrigation for crop production is the best opportunity to change the conflict situation in the study area.
- The existence of peace and militia offices for the promotion of peace and security in conflict-ridden areas is another opportunity for peacebuilding. The local and zonal offices are working together with the conflict early warning and response offices to prevent conflicts.
- The political development of self-administration is also a good opportunity to govern them in a way that participates in the decisions, and policy-making process of the government about the peacebuilding strategy of the state.
- Strengthening the indigenous system of conflict resolution in each ethnic group of the study area; community plays a significant role in the peacebuilding practices even if it never makes a lasting solution to peace. It creates a pathway for peacebuilding intervention.
- The last but not the least opportunity identified by the researcher is the indirect conflict intervention made by governmental, NGOs, and intergovernmental organizations. They contribute a lot in education and development which directly and indirectly creates a peaceful way of life in the community.

Conclusion

Multidimensional peacebuilding is applied in the study area. Peaceful co-existence for sharing or controlling resources is the dream of the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist community in the study area. The multiple actors of peacebuilding are practised to reduce conflict and to sustain peace among the community but are not fully effective in creating peace. The conflict dynamics are now reduced and there is relative peace but the conflict situation is sessional. The conflict increased in dry sessions when the amount of water and pasture were reduced. The role of the local government, peace committees, international organizations, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and public administrators are significant to mitigate conflicts in the study area. Moreover, tribal leaders as part of the customary institutions played very important roles in preserving and building peace among the community and in cross-border conflicts. The resource-based conflict is still on and needs a new creative mechanism to reduce it, and to build peace. Turkana county leaders and the Dassanech, Hamer and Nyangatom Woreda of Ethiopia worked together to reduce conflict and violence but it lacks the coordination and cooperation to work together for peace. Governments and other bodies need to engage in conflict intervention mechanisms to create sustainable peace and reduce the negative impacts of conflict. Furthermore, the government of Ethiopia should realize the

formulated policy on peacebuilding, and focus on conflict sensitivity in development projects in the area. Realizing peace leadership in the local context is also recommended as part of the ongoing peacebuilding activities.

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Authors' Declarations and Essential Ethical Compliances

Authors' Contributions (in accordance with ICMJE criteria for authorship)

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Research involving human bodies or organs or tissues (Helsinki Declaration)
The author(s) solemnly declare(s) that this research has not involved any human subject (body or organs) for experimentation. It was not a clinical research. The contexts of human population/participation were only indirectly covered through literature review. Therefore, an Ethical Clearance (from a Committee or Authority) or ethical obligation of Helsinki Declaration does not apply in cases of this study or written work.

Research involving animals (ARRIVE Checklist)
The author(s) solemnly declare(s) that this research has not involved any animal subject (body or organs) for experimentation. The research was not based on laboratory experiment involving any kind animal. The contexts of animals were only indirectly covered through literature review. Therefore, an Ethical Clearance (from a Committee or Authority) or ethical obligation of ARRIVE does not apply in cases of this study or written work.

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The author(s) solemnly declare(s) that this research has not involved Indigenous Peoples as participants or respondents. The contexts of Indigenous Peoples or Indigenous Knowledge were only indirectly covered through literature review. Therefore, an Ethical Clearance (from a Committee or Authority) or prior informed consent (PIC) of the respondents or Self-Declaration in this regard does not apply in cases of this study or written work.

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The author(s) solemnly declare(s) that this research has involved the plants for experiment and field studies. Some contexts of plants are also indirectly covered through literature review. Thus, during this research the author(s) obeyed the principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

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The author(s) solemnly declare(s) that this research has not directly involved any local community participants or respondents belonging to non-Indigenous peoples. Neither this study involved any child in any form directly. The contexts of different humans, people, populations, men/women/children and ethnic people were only indirectly covered through literature review. Therefore, an Ethical Clearance (from a Committee

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The author(s) has/have NOT complied with PRISMA standards. It is not relevant in case of this study or written work.

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